Ontario
Ministry
of
Education

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Thomas L. Wells
Minister

Physical Fitness and Your Child

The increasing emphasis on physical education and fitness in Ontario today reflects society's growing awareness that education must be concerned with the total child and not only with academic progress. Research indicates that a child's health, well-being, and academic performance are enhanced by regular participation in a well-planned, well-organized physical education program. In addition, the maintenance of personal fitness is essential for coping with the stresses of modern life.

Here Are Some Facts

Eighty per cent of Canadians are physically inactive, and half of the adult population is overweight.

The average Canadian is not physically fit.

For the average Canadian child, physical fitness begins to decrease from the time he/she starts school, although physical activity is necessary to ensure normal growth and development.

Postural defects and obesity in school children are increasing at alarming rates due in part to lack of exercise.

Medical and educational authorities agree that a program of physical education is important to counteract obesity, poor motor control, and stress and to promote growth, general health and well-being, and academic success.

Fitness

Changes in lifestyle and recent technological inventions have caused our activity level to fall below that necessary to support good health. In order to look our best, to feel our best, and to be able to do our best, it is necessary to become fit through a regular program of exercise. For these reasons, fitness is one of the most important elements of a comprehensive physical education program.

Participation

Mass participation in regular physical education classes and involvement in after-school activities will help to improve the fitness level of students. It is a major objective of physical education programs in Ontario schools to provide the opportunity for everyone to develop and maintain an adequate level of fitness.

Program Activity

In order for every child to develop an interest in physical activity, the physical education program must be varied. Activities in gymnastics, dance, games, aquatics, drama, movement, and fitness as recommended in Ontario's curriculum guidelines for both elementary and secondary schools provide this variety. During the last several years in Ontario, there has been an improvement in the qualifications of teachers and in the facilities and equipment available in the area of physical education. Very recently, several Ontario schools began scheduling daily rhythmical fitness activities to supplement the regular physical education program.

Everyone has a responsibility to help in developing, maintaining, and promoting sound programs of physical education.

Students should know about the complete physical education program in their school, participate regularly in it, and volunteer to help with it. They should understand and develop their own fitness and encourage friends and relatives to participate in physical activities.

Parents should know what physical education is available at their children's school, and encourage their children to participate in it on a regular basis. Parents should also participate in activities with their children and friends and set an example by being physically fit themselves.

The teacher's job is to provide a well-balanced physical education program, to encourage children to participate in it, and to understand the philosophical bases for such programs.

Principals and school board administrators should fully understand and support the need for physical activity and should provide qualified professional staff, facilities, equipment, and finances to allow for maximum program development. They should encourage students, parents, and school staff members to become familiar with, and participate in, activities and should also encourage professional development of all staff members in physical education and fitness concepts.

I wholeheartedly support the scheduling of daily physical education classes in the elementary schools in Ontario.

The information contained in this brochure will communicate to the public the need for comprehensive and sound physical education programs for Ontario children. I urge all students, parents, school staffs, and administrators to join with me in promoting a positive attitude towards physical education.

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